

world. This conference report will ensure that our military remains the best-trained, best-equipped, and best prepared force to continue confronting these evolving challenges. To that end, I am pleased that this legislation authorizes an across-the-board 4.1 percent pay increase, along with targeted increases of up to 6.5 percent for N.C.O.s and officers. This represents the fourth largest increase for military personnel since 1982. In addition, this legislation also includes provisions for improvements to health care and education for our service members, provisions I consider crucial to increasing the recruiting and retention rates of highly qualified military personnel.

As a member of the House Budget Committee, I have fought to recognize the immeasurable contributions of America's disabled veterans by being a strong proponent for concurrent receipt. I believe disabled military retirees deserve both disability and retirement benefits, therefore I am pleased that this defense authorization changes current law to allow veterans who earned a Purple Heart or who suffered a severe injury in a combat-related incident to receive both retirement and disability benefits. Although this provision targets only those specific veterans who are 60 percent disabled and I believe this benefit should be extended to additional veterans, I find this legislation a good first step in the right direction and urge my colleagues to continue supporting further efforts expanding concurrent receipt coverage in the future.

This conference report provides \$7.3 billion to support DoD efforts to combat global terrorism, including funds for counterterrorism, force protection, counter-intelligence, and anti-terrorism programs. To guard against the threat weapons of mass destruction pose to the United States, this report authorizes \$993 million for advanced chemical-biological detection, protection, and decontamination programs, \$148.2 million for biowarfare defense technology, and \$416.7 million funding efforts securing weapons of mass destruction and dismantling their facilities in the former Soviet Union. With respect to homeland defense, this legislation will require the DoD to work with the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies to share promising new technology, as well as assist local "first responders" improve their ability to respond to domestic terrorist actions.

While I will vote in support of this legislation, I have concerns regarding the process of base closures. With regard to base closures, I am concerned that language contained in this defense authorization would allow base closures to take place without adequate consultation with Members of Congress and affected communities. While I have a consistent record of supporting cost-savings in all areas of the federal budget, I do not believe another round of base closures should be conducted until the DoD makes a thorough evaluation as to whether its current infrastructure is in a position to cope with the changing security environment. The threats facing our nation require that infrastructure on the local, state, and certainly the federal level be prepared and adequate to confront any possible scenarios. Due to language that would require 7 of 9 members of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) approve any base closure, I strongly encourage the DoD to consult closely with Members of Congress. I believe the concerns of potentially affected

areas must be closely considered. The loss of a military base can prove potentially devastating for defense-dependent local economies, such is the case in my home state of Texas. Not only that, but in many cases, the additional level of disaster and emergency assistance provided by nearby military facilities can prove extremely helpful to local communities. As such, I believe the DoD and Congress should be cautious and prudent in planning the closure of bases that will be carrying our military's mission in the coming months and years.

While I have concerns about these provisions, I strongly support this Conference Report because it is important Congress speak with one voice in support of our armed services. On balance, the initiatives included in this bipartisan legislation are appropriate, and will provide our dedicated men and women in uniform with the necessary resources to cope with the demanding security challenges facing our nation. I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this important legislation.

#### HONORING THE OPENING OF THE EAGLE ROCK ART MUSEUM IN IDAHO FALLS, ID

**HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 14, 2002*

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the beauty and value of persistence. Ten years ago, a group of artists along with the Mayor and City Council of Idaho Falls had the idea of creating an area art museum. This huge undertaking would take thousands of volunteer hours and many fundraising efforts to become a reality. Today, I'm proud to say through the hard work of those dedicated volunteers and public servants, the Eagle Rock Art Museum opened its doors.

The Eagle Rock Art Museum showcases eastern Idaho artists. As someone who occasionally dabbles in artistic endeavors, I value the cultural significance art plays in our society. Visitors to this wonderful facility can now marvel at stone sculptures, oil and watercolor pictures, tiles painted by children and other compelling works of art. Children can enter the doors of the Eagle Rock Art Museum and be inspired by the work it showcases. There's even a children's art gallery to display the work of our youngest citizens.

In civilization, art transcends age. The works of Michelangelo, Leonardo DaVinci, Claude Monet and modern day artists like Norman Rockwell breathe light into culture. The works of artists live on forever through museums like the Eagle Rock Art Museum. I'm proud of the community of Idaho Falls for working to make the Eagle Rock Art Museum a reality. The selfless efforts of many illustrate the powerful principle of working together for a common cause. I compliment Idaho Falls Mayor Linda Milam, Council members Ida Hardcastle and Mel Erickson, artists Gloria Miller Allen and John Griffith and the hundreds of other artists, individuals, and businesses that helped create the art museum. Thanks to their efforts generations of Idahoans will have a lasting appreciation for the importance of art in our world.

#### CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF QUALITY IN FEDERAL PROCUREMENT

**HON. TOM DAVIS**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 14, 2002*

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, October 27, a milestone in Federal procurement was observed. That day marked the 30th anniversary of President Nixon's signing of the "Brooks Act" qualifications based selection (QBS) process into law as Public Law 92-582.

This law, which prescribes the process by which Federal agencies select contractors for architecture, engineering and related services ("A/E services"), is codified in 40 USC 541 et. sq. for civilian agencies and, by reference, also applies to military agencies (10 USC 2855). Regulations implementing the law are found in part 36 of the Federal Acquisition Regulations.

Named for its sponsor, our respected former colleague, the Honorable Jack Brooks of Texas, the Brooks Act provides for selection of firms for A/E services on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualifications, with negotiation of a fee that is fair and reasonable to the government.

Agencies publicly announce their requirements for A/E services, firms submit their qualifications (including resumes of personnel, past performance, experience and background), agencies review the competing firms' qualifications, a short list of most qualified firms is established and agencies conduct interviews, and the most qualified firm is selected for specific contract negotiations of the precise scope of services to be performed and negotiation of a fee that is "fair and reasonable to the government" based on the government's own estimate of the project cost.

QBS has been a trendsetter. When it was enacted in 1972, the QBS law was a radical exception to the government's overwhelming reliance on awarding contracts based on the lowest bidder. Indeed, QBS was a precursor to the trend that came in the 1990s to migrate from lowest bid to best value procurement. Moreover, contractors' past performance is a major factor in the evaluation and selection process—again something used in A/E contracting since 1972, but which became commonplace in other areas of Federal procurement in the 1990s.

The Federal government annually spends billions of dollars on construction of facilities and has capital assets of hundreds of billions. This investment is highly dependent on A/E services for feasibility studies, design, operation and maintenance. It has been said that A/E services accounts for less than 1/10th of 1 percent of the life-cycle cost of a facility, but the quality of the A/E services performed determine what the life cycle cost will be.

The wisdom of Congress in passing, and President Nixon in signing, the "Brooks Act", and of Congress in preserving this law for the past 30 years, has provide the American public with quality, cost effective and efficient A/E services on projects that stand the test of time.

The wisdom of the law is also demonstrated by the degree to which it has been emulated. The QBS process is included in the Model